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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 001861

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/E, AF/RSA, AND A/S CARSON

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [MOPS](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: SOMALIA - TFG, KENYA ASK HELP OUSTING SHABAAB IN
THE FAR SOUTH

REF: A. IIR 6 854 0328 09
[1](#)B. IIR 6 854 0327 09
[1](#)C. IIR 6 854 0340 09
[1](#)D. IIR 6 854 0342 09
[1](#)E. IIR 6 854 0343 09
[1](#)F. NAIROBI 1732
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[1](#)L. NAIROBI 1669
[1](#)M. NAIROBI 1665

Classified By: Ambassador Michael Ranneberger for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)
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[1](#)1. (S//NF) Summary: This is an action request. See paragraph six. Somali and Kenyan officials are working in concert to support a locally-driven effort in Lower Juba and Gedo to expel al-Shabaab. Somali President Sheikh Sharif and the Kenyan government have asked us to support the plan with weapons, medical supplies, communications and intelligence. Lower Juba's and Gedo's key clan leaders and most powerful militia commanders are reportedly behind the initiative. The Kenyans are supporting the effort, in coordination with the TFG, by training 36 Somalis and ethnic Somali Kenyan retired military officers for insertion into Somalia. The Kenyans are also procuring transportation and weapons to assist a coordinated Somali attack on Shabaab in Juba and Gedo beginning late September or early October, though local realities will ultimately dictate the time table. This effort will be coordinated with TFG-led offensives in other parts of the country as well. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (S//NF) Reftels A-I detail Somali and Kenyan plans to oust al-Shabaab from the Somali regions of Lower Juba and Gedo, and the Somali politics behind the effort. Transitional Federal Government President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed (on September 2), and numerous of our contacts over the past weeks tell us Ras Kamboni leaders Ahmed Madobe (Darod/Ogaden/Mohamed Zubeir) and Ibrahim Shukri (Darod/Ogaden/Mohamed Zubeir) intend to attack al-Shabaab in Lower Juba in the coming days or weeks. In a coordinated attack the Darod/Marehan, led by among others, associates of TFG-allied former member of parliament Barre Hirale (Darod/Marehan/Rer Dini), are expected to strike al-Shabaab in the Gedo region. It is hoped the simultaneous attacks will overwhelm al-Shabaab's reported inferior numbers in both regions. Madobe and Shukri likely will attempt to capture the key Lower Juba port town of Kismayo from Shabaab. (Note:

Kismayo serves as an important foreign fighter entry point, logistical hub, and source of revenue and possibly weapons for al-Shabaab, which has controlled the town since ousting an unpopular Marehan administration in August 2008.)

13. (S//NF) Separately, the Kenyan National Security and Intelligence Service Director Michael Gichangi, Deputy Army Commander Major General Njuki Mwaniki, and Director of Military Intelligence (DMI) Brigadier Phillip Kameru have given us details of the GOK plan to assist the Juba and Gedo uprisings with retired ethnic-Somali Kenyan military advisors, trained Somalis from the region, as well as roughly 70 armed technicals, weapons, ammunition, communications and logistics. The Kenyans tell us 36 Somalis from Gedo and Lower Juba on September 4 completed a six-week training as tactical advisors. In the coming days they and their Kenyan advisors will return to Somalia with communications, and, if available, weapons and equipment, and link up with local militia leaders to provide tactical guidance and help liaise with the GOK. The Kenyans tell us they anticipate the Somalis will launch attacks in late September or early October. DMI Kameru and the Kenyan government have requested we assist the joint TFG-Kenyan effort with weapons, medical supplies, communications and imagery intelligence.

14. (S//NF) President Sharif confirmed to the Ambassador on September 2 that he requested and approves of Kenyan assistance to TFG-aligned forces in Juba and Gedo. He sees this as a TFG-led effort, and confirmed Ahmed Madobe is in close touch with the TFG. President Sharif urged us to respond positively to the Kenyan request for materiel and

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intelligence support. President Sharif said this initiative in the south is part of a larger TFG effort to foment anti-Shabaab uprisings in multiple regions simultaneously, in order to overwhelm Shabaab's smaller, but more mobile forces. Already in Galgaduud and Hiran, al-Shabaab is under pressure (reftels J-M). Likewise, we have heard from multiple sources that Shabaab has reduced its number of forces in Mogadishu and may be vulnerable there.

15. (S//NF) In their separate meetings with us, the Kenyans, President Sharif and his Ogadeni Minister for Transport (and former Minister of Defense) Mohammed Abdi "Ghandi" assured us they are mitigating the risk that southern Somali clan dynamics might derail an otherwise militarily sound plan. "Ghandi" is in discussions with Marehan and Ogadeni leaders, urging cooperation and unity. The 36 Somali trainees were chosen by the Marehan and Ogadeni military leaders to whom they will report. Our contacts tell us the Prime Minister and Ghandi are speaking to Madobe about his intentions and how the TFG and Kenya can help. The Kenyans tell us they are meeting regularly with Shukri, who is committed to their plan.

16. (S//NF) Comment and Action Request: We believe the Kenyan and TFG requests for assistance should be seriously considered. The Kenyan DMI told us they would welcome weapons, medical supplies, communications and intelligence support immediately. Intelligence support could be provided through existing liaison with the DMI, Kenyan Intelligence Service, and TFG intelligence services. Simple communications, such as satellite phones, could be quickly provided to the TFG, to enable them to communicate with the Kenyan advisors.

17. (S//NF) Comment and Action Request Continued: We should also consider how best to capitalize on the possible success of this initiative. If this plan accomplishes its goal of a TFG-allied capture of Kismayo, we can help the TFG to capitalize on the move by assisting them with their public diplomacy efforts. We should also plan for an immediate surge of humanitarian and development assistance into Lower Juba and Gedo, should there be success, in order to show the population the benefits of resistance to al-Shabaab. A rapid

reaction from the donor community would give other communities confidence to reject extremists. The question of whether and how elements of the Africa Union Mission for Somalia contingent might go to Kismayo to assist with stabilization should also now be considered.

18. (S) In considering possible assistance, we should ensure both accountability and vetting of those receiving support. While making no commitments, we remain in close contact with the Kenyans and TFG on this and await Washington guidance on possible next steps.

RANNEBERGER